## CAMEO KIRI

By Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson

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Adapted From the Play of the Same Name by W. B. M. Ferguson

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CHAPTER III.

B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B++++---

LONEL JACQUES GAS-PARD DESCHAMPS MO-REAU, to give him his full title, doing all things thor oughly, as befitted one of his honorable

character, was not satisfied with, as he thought, disposing of Kirby's physical existence, but considered it his pleasurable duty to effectually rain whatever little reputation had survived during the other's downward career.

Kirby, presumably fatally wounded. had been carried ashore by Bunce at the next landing, and, in those days shooting and stabbing affrays emanating from card games being only too common, but little attention had been paid to the affair. Cameo Kirby was notorious the length of the river, and such an abrupt and tragic termination of his career had not only been frequently and cheerfully predicted, but was, moreover, expected of all such members as graced his questionable profession. Indeed, for them a sober and respectable death would have been considered bad form. Among the gambling profession there existed a certain code, which in a manner served to link those at the top, who, like Kirby and Bunce, wooed fortune bonestly, to the Moreau type, gracing and disgracing the lowest rung in the gamblers' social ladder. This code, if so it may be termed, was an understanding to the effect that in no instance, however great the provocation, should the law be invoked. Wrongs, fancied or an thentic, were to be redressed solely by the bearers thereof, the joint office of judge and executioner being vested in each separate and distinct individual.

In view of this accepted understanding, Larkin Bunce had accordingly made no mention of the fact that a probable murder had been committed, and, the passengers and steamship officials dismissing it as a gamblers' quarrel, which was none of their affair, no stigma or notoriety was attached to the good Colonel Moreau, who, claiming to be an old and valued friend of Mr. Randall, had gone to the latter's stateroom and brazenly assumed charge of the body. Bunce's laconle statemen was too pitifully true, for the old planter had effectually ended his life.

Again referring to Colonel Moreau's happy faculty of doing all things well, it was quite characteristic that to complete his revenge against Cameo Kirby he now did not besitate to assum charge of Mr. Randall's body, did not hesitate to meet the son of the man for whose death he had been directly and shamefully responsible, for young Tom Randall had ridden over to the Plaquemine landing in order to greet stend all was bustle and excitement in honor of the master's homecoming.

Anxiously Tom Randall waited to see the jovial and well known figure of his father march down the gangplank, waited to catch a glimpse of the familiar and weather besten green private stateroom, plied him with me portmanteau which the planter always carried. The moments passed. Other and numerous passengers stepped ashore, to be eagerly welcomed and claimed by their own, but John Randall was not among them. A curious and seemingly pregnant hush had suc-

ceeded the landing of the freight, and off somewhere in the darkness a child whimpered shrilly. The boy's nerves were set on edge. Perhaps his father was having a farewell talk with the captain and would come dashing out at the last moment with all his old disregard for time and place. It was time the bell was clanging, the signal for backing away, for by now the landing of passengers and freight appeared to be terminated. And still no John Ran dall. The boy walked along the stringpiece until the Texas deck came the more prominently into view, the glow from the open windows of the port staterooms silhouetting the lean visaged pilot, absolute monarch of his realm, who now that an easy stretch of the river had been entered loafed about while his cub took the wheel.

"Hello, on board the Shotwell!" shouted young Randall, looking up at the pilothouse. "Is that you, Mr. Bixby? This is Tom Randall. Do you know if my father is on board? We

For reply Mr. Bixby, usually the pattern of courtesy, offered a memosyllabic affirmative and turned from

But young Randall had no time to nurse his quick resentment, for now. at last, his father had come ashore,

borne on the shoulders of two roustabouts, while the captain and officers stood with bared heads and thankfully through his right lung, was making a the tragedy to the amiable and willing Colonel Moreau.

"My boy," said the latter, now laying a fatherly hand on young Randall's heaving shoulder, "although 1 am a stranger to yoh, suh, I have ventured to assume temporary control of this terrible affair, foh I am a southern gentleman, as was Mr. Randall, and I feel bound to you all by the ties of sympathy and country. I was a witness, suh, to the events which preceded and prompted this outrage, and, although Isam aware it is but poh satisfaction, still it is some thing to know that the scoundrel who was instrumental in causing yoh pol father's death has already paid foh it with his life. My name, suh, is Colonel Moreau, and if I can be of any further service to you all in this dark hour of tribulation pray com



mand me, suh. As an old soldier beg of yoh to meet this calamity with the fobtlitude of a Christian gentle man," with which admirable and pious adjuration the good colonel flourishes his handkerchief and helped himsel to a generous pinch of souff.

"I-I thank you, Colonel Moreau, for all you have done," said young Ran dall stonly, looking on the huddle thing at his feet. "You-you say you witnessed my father's death?"

"Not exactly, suh, foh he shot him self in his stateroom. However hard to bear, I think yoh should know wh and what prompted his death. The scoundrel, suh, was the notoriou Cameo Kirby, of whom, perhaps, you have heard.

Young Randall nodded dully, an

Moreau, entering into the spirit of the tale, continued: "I folimed an acquaint ance, suh, with yoh poh father who he came aboard at New Orleans. He confided to every one that he had sold his sugar crop foh ten thousand and had the cash with him, and he was In mighty high spirits because he was on his way back home to see his chill dren. Poh gentleman! As delicately as I can I must state that he was not quite himself, and by that, suh, I mean that he had been imbibing a little too freely. I don't have to tell yob, sub. that there are certain characters on all the big boats who keep a pretty sharp lookout foh gentlemen with money who are in the condition you pob father. suh, was in tonight, and I expect there was more than one river gamble board who would have liked to get his hands on Mr. Randall. But the one who got him was the slickest and elev erest of the lot, the Cameo Kirby whom I have mentioned. This rascal suh, invelgled yoh poh father into-a liquor and won from him not only al his money and personal effects-even including a miniature of yoh dead mother, sub-but also a deed to his en tire plantation and all his slaves, every thing which he owned. I was too late to save Mr. Randall, but I knew Kirby by repute, and I was so screamingly outraged by the whole affair that I de nounced him foh the low scoundre he was. Thereupon he drew on me, by I was the quicker and shot him dow like a dog. They carried him ashore sub, at the landing below this, and the

river is cleaner foh his death." "You have taken vengeance out my hands," said young Randail unsteadily. "The coward and villain For a stranger, sir, the attitude which you have displayed toward my family has been most considerate, and I will

never forget it. The-the hospitality of a house in mourning"-

"No, no, my boy," interrupted Moreau, again employing his fatherly hand. "I am sensible of the honor, but I couldn't think of it. This is a time when yoh all must wish to be alone, and business calls me north. 1 merely stepped ashore in yoh interests as any gentleman would have done. There goes the bell, and I must run for it. Honored, suh, to have made were expecting him by your boat, sir." | yoh acquaintance, though of co'se I deeply deplore the necessity which occasioned it. I will venture to pay my respects to yoh family when I return south, and pray command me in any occasion yoh may have. Yoh servant, sub." And with a magnificent bow the colonel turned and raced for the gangplank, boarding the Shotwell with

a leap that shamed his fifty odd years. Meanwhile Cameo Kirby, a bullet desperate battle against death, fighting for the life which he had considered little better than worthless. Ir his efforts he was materially assisted by the crude but faithful Bunce, his gambling partner, with whom he had played up and down the Mississippi for years. For two weeks this combat raged, Kirby hovering between life and death, but at the end he emerged triumphant as, over the gaming table when the odds were as heavily against him, he had emerged from many a

hotly contested conflict. To those who judged Kirby's character from the evil reports which gossip had spread concerning him and to others who, in their righteous ignorance. considered all gamblers legitimate children of the devil his remarkable recovery would have been accepted mere-

and that a scoundrel is difficult to kill, rance and self righteousness love to distribute on every fitting occasion.

Among possessors of the last mentioned attribute Eugene Kirby was regarded as a black sheep who, re- Randall. How much did the boy now ligiously avoiding the whitewash brush, was deemed beyond redemption, for what man worthy of the name would have acted as had the last of the Kirbes? What if he had been but fifteen when his father died a bankrupt? What if he had been left an orphan, a pauper, with no immediate relative to care how he acted? Wasn't the heritage of an ancient and concrable name, the knowledge that ome of the oldest and best blood in all the south flowed in his veins. enough to keep him straight? Most assuredly it was. There was abso lutely no excuse for his drifting in with wild and dissolute companions secoming a common river gambler and endering notorious and obnoxious a ame which had hitherto been the ynouym for honor and integrity.

Kirby had been kept in Ignorance of Mr. Randall's suicide, but when at ength he became convalescent Lar kin Bunce, harking back to the events of that memorable night, informed him, and the invalid, on his part, recounted the occurrences preceding Colonel Moreau's precipitation of the "honorable" combat

"The news of Mr. Randall's death is great shock," he added, greatly mov "He was my father's friend Bunce, and when the devil played havoe with our affairs did all in his power to be of assistance. But for



my great pride I would have accepted his offer of guardian and, under his supervision, I hope, would have been a credit to the name instead of the disgrace I nm.'

"Now, you quit these here postmor tems," remonstrated Bunce good na turedly, but firmly. "You don't call me a disgrace, do you? And ain't I your old side partner? Bosh, if you play the game straight I guess there's lots gambling. The sawbones said a lot of rest was coming your way . get it."

"No. I can't Eunce. Don't you re alize the position in which I am placed by Mr. Randall's death? I hold a deed ber black dress, while twin patches of to his entire plantation, and I must sign a release without delay. What if it should ever be thought that I entered the game in earnest, with the deliberate intention of robbing Mr. Randall? You know my reputation. he added bitterly, "and how easy it is for a dog to earn a bad same. Bring me pen and ink at once, Larkin, if you please, for I won't have a moment's peace until I sign that paper."

Propped up on the pillows and supported by the still grumbling Bunce, he wrote the following:

I hereby surrender the absolute possession of all the property herein described to the child or children of John Randall. EUGENE KIRBY.

"There?" he exclaimed. "Now I feel better, and there is no chance of my old neighbor's children being defraud ed out of their inheritance."

"You worry a heap more about them than yourself," observed Bunce, "and there's no call for it. Even if they knew you had got this deed you're reckoned as a dead man by everybody I heard from one of the boys that Moreau had skipped to Mexico, but you know how the river calls, and he'll answer sooner or later. When the fine old bucko does return don't be foo enough to give him another chance at your back, for he's a painfully modest cuss and prefers to stay in the rear By rights he ought to get the same dose he gave you, and I'd do it for the asking."

"You know you wouldn't," said Kirby simply. "The moment I learn that Moreau has returned you may arrange a meeting for us. You can leave the

Bunce nodded. "I guess there ain't any one who could get the better of you, Gene, face to face. I ain't much of a hand at the gospel, but I'll scare up a prayer or two for Jack Moreau's

CHAPTER IV.

LMOST one year elapsed be-A fore Colonel Moreau, harkening at length to the call of the river, returned to his old haunts in New Orleans. When it's did so it was to learn that his supposed victim had entirely recovered from the effects of the "honorable combat" and, in conjunction with his partner, had reoccupied his old aiche of famepremier professional gambler of the Mississippi. Quite aside from all financlai reasons—the fact that a more skillful and successful rival was garnering the major spoils of the riverthe news of his victim's recovery was seriously disquieting to the honorable colonel, and had he been forewarned he might have indefinitely prolonged

favors his own, that the mills of the ful climate of Mexico. He knew that solutely necessary. Above all, there shot him on sight, but I venture to gods grind slowly, that justice is blind | Kirby was not the type of man to forget or condone a bullet in the back together with many similar ancient or the smirching of whatever little reand redoubtable maxims which igno- mained of his once fair reputation. and had he even remotely suspected that he would recover he (Moreau) would not have prevaricated so cheer fully and with such abandon to young know? That was the all important question. Kirby, of course, had learn ed that he stood accused of the late John Randall's suicide, but had he taken the trouble to refute it? Moresu did not think so, and Moreau

was right. Kirby had but vaguely beard of the unjust accusation and, having been ong since casehardened to calumny in all its phases, paid little if any at tention. Had any member of the Randall family sought him out he would as a matter of duty, have proved his innoceace. But they, believing him dead, had not done so, and he refused to take the initiative, partly because he could not give absolute credence to the rumor, but in a greater measure because of the demands upon his time. After all, it did not matter. It meant only another tally to the score of Jack Moreau, and all would be wiped out by that gentleman's death, an undertaking upon which he had definitely decided. What stood be tween them could be eradicated only by the bullet.

Meanwhile the passing year had brought with it many changes for the surviving members of the Randall fam Hy. Life is tenacious, and they had persisted in surviving as best they could the shock incident upon their father's suicide. The one small measure of satisfaction in the whole ter rible affair was the knowledge that the despoller of their home had promptly met his death and that in consequence they were at least saved from pauper ization, for they were entirely igno rant of Kirby's recovery or the meas ures he had voluntarily taken for their

To the only girl, Adele, had faller the brunt of suffering. The General, a child of eight, was too young to fully omprehend his loss, while Tom, a hot headed youth in his early twenties occupied all his time with the plantation and devoted all spare moments to nursing his hatred against Kirby's memory. While glorying in the lat ter's supposed death he deployed that his hand had not effected it. Where grief had paralyzed Adele it had but further aroused the boy's militant and aggressive nature, adding, moreover, a veneer of youthful and bitter cynicism He abborred Kirby's memory with an intensity passing the hatred of man and, even had he been a stranger to the then prevailing and primit to no tions of justice, would, had he known the other lived, have immediately sought him our and killed him. If his father's memory demanded that no resistance should be made to the gam bler's claim it likewise demanded that the latter should not live overlong to enjoy his newly acquired property.

More than once, as if uneasy intul tion sought to prompt the truth, the boy had suggested to his sister the pos sibility of Kirby having survived Mo reau's sincere attentions. Then he would break out in an ungovernable fit of fury and hatred.

"Supposing that scoundrel has lived and intends reaping the reward of his of worse ways of making a living than crime;" he would cry. "He gained that deed by the vilest scoundrelism good his claim if he can."

> "But who will dispute it?" Adele would lifelessly inquire, plucking at scarlet would begin to burn in the dead white of her face. "Do you think we could stoop to ask mercy from a man of that stamp? Whether the deed was gained honestly or not it does not matter. Father's signature is on the paper, and we must stand by it, Tom. You know that. Anyway," she would finish drearily, "what does it matter? What does it matter where we go, what we become? Let this Mr. Kirby-if that be his namefinish the work he began so well."

"I-1 wish you could pluck up a little more spirit, Dele," he would return, solicitous and resentful in the one breath. "Doesn't the thought of that scoundrel's possible recovery make your blood boll? Don't you ever



SUPPOSING THAT SCOUNDREL INTENDS REAPING THE REWARD OF HIS CRIME! consider the thought of you and the

General and me being rendered absolute paupers? Think of what it would mean to leave the only home we have

"I have thought of all that until my brain is sick-sick like my heart," she would interrupt colorlessly. have long contemplated the possibility thought that the deed might, after all be enforced. I have talked the mat ter over with Aunt Davezac. We have decided that the moment we learn that this-this gambler is alive we will put the place in order and leave Immediately for New Orleans-again quarter ourselves on aunty. After that-well, you and I must learn how to work. Tom. We must provide for the General's schooling, and of course ly as another proof that the evil one his acquaintance with the more health. vezac one moment longer than is abwe cannot be a burden on Aunt Da-

must on no account be any opposition to this Mr. Kirby's claim, supposing be still lives."

"Yes, I suppose you're right, Dele," he would reluctantly agree. "We could not dishonor father's memory by resisting the scoundrel's claim."

And had sorrow not blurred the girl's erception, rendered her indifferent to everything, she would instantly have suspected her brother's ingentiousness for, hot headed and impulsive, he was not one to heed advice, accept the passive course that she had outlined.

As the months passed and nothing was heard of Kirby the possibility of his being alive and ever claiming the plantation was finally abandoned by Adele. But young Randall, although carefully professing to the contrary. still entertained the suspicion that his enemy lived. In time the thought became so insistent that he determined to quietly set on foot a thorough investigation. Visiting in person the town in which Kirby had fought his victorious battle against death, he eventually succeeded in tracing the physician who had attended the wounded gambler, and by him the boy's suspicions were verified beyond the possibility of a doubt. His intuition was vindicated. Kirby lived and, so far as the doctor knew, was at that moment busily engaged with his chosen profession.

Young Randall returned home, carefully concealing from his sister all hint of his mission. The girl had but lately expressed a desire to visit their aunt in New Orleans, for the plantation was pregnant with memories and sorrows that were fast growing unbearable. Taking advantage of this opportune desire and keeping his real purpose in the background, Tom now suggested that the house be temporarily closed and the long contemplated visit paid.

Securing Adele's assent to this and satisfied that Kirby was alive and that justice had yet to be meted out, young Randall, as was the custom in such matters, promptly set about informing his male relatives and friends. Among the latter was Judge Pleydell, a neighbor, whose plantation adjoined on the west that of the Randalis and to whose daughter, Ann, the boy was engaged Tom's sole surviving relative was an elderly cousin, Anron Randall, who, ignorant of the details connected with his uncle's death, had for over a year been detained by business interests in the morth. To him Tom now argently wrote, requesting that he come to the home of their mutual aunt in New Orleans, and the following morning the Pleydell and Randall families set out for the same destination. In the Crescent City there resided another gentle man, M. Anatole Venudry, who, hav ing for years sought an alliance with the Randall family through the medium of Adele, would naturally be expected to concur heartily in the plans for the annihilation of Cameo Kirby. Four to one were heavy odds, but the scapegrace gambler in his day had accented greater. In due time the Randalls and Pley-

dells arrived at the home of Mme. Davezac, but the weeks passed and as yet no information had been re father." ceived tending to show that Kirby contemplated securing the property. In hibited further discussion of the subfact, Tom Randall, scouring the city ject. for the gambier, positively learned that the tatter and his partner, Bunce, had "the gentlemen talk secrets already." left. This was indeed the case, for M. Aaron," she added graciously, "you Kirby's sole motive in coming to New and I have not met for many years." Orleans had been the desire to run "A great toss to me," he gallantly down a rumor to the effect that Jack replied, kissing her proffered hand. Moreau had returned to his old haunts "A happy meeting, madame. colonel had already left for Baton ingly, "were discussing plans for the headed for the Crescent City, Kirby and Bunce close upon his heels.

And then the inevitable happened, for one day in the streets of New Or leans Tom Randall came face to face with Moreau. On both sides the meet ing was an affecting one, the astute colonel's momentary alarm turning to relief when, from the boy's effusive greeting, be ascertained the other egreeable state of ignorance regarding the true facts of John Randall's sui cide. Tom at once confield his inten-tion of killing Canfeo Kirby, and, delighted at securing such unexpected reenforcements, Moreau heartily concurred in the intention, offering his modest co-operation in the same worthy cause. On his part the boy was only too happy to accept the further serv ices of so valuable a friend, and be promptly invited Moreau to Mme Davezac's, an invitation that was as promptly accepted, it being quite characteristic of the estimable gentleman to accept the hospitality of those whom he had irretrievably wronged.

Learning from Moreau that Kirby was in the city and, in fact, had been seen only that morning at the Salle de Conde, young Randall hurriedly returned to his aunt's, determined to set on foot a plan that had been suggested by Judge Pleydell. That moldy villain, Colonel Moreau, promised to join the other the moment he had secured his portmanteau. Meanwhile Aaron Randall, an elder-

ly, precise gentleman, whose long so journ in the north had served to some what cool his fiery southern nature had promptly answered his cousin's urgent letter by shelving all business demands and hastening south. An old bachelor, his late uncle and he had been unusually close to each other through life, and he had lavished all his affection upon the other's children, Adele in particular being his especial favorite, Business cares had prohibited his attendance at John Randall's funeral, and, in fact, he had been kept in ignorance of the facts surrounding the other's suicide, Adele holding that it would cause needless worry and sor

The unpleasant duty of explaining the tragedy devolved upon Judge Pley dell, and, even while Tom was renew ing his acquaintance with Colonel Mo reau, Aaron had arrived at the little house in the old French quarter of the town and Pleydell was recounting to him their plan of campaign against Kirby.

"We have all our plans arranged. sir," the old judge was now saying. while he paced the room in some excitement, "and I have taken affairs more or less into my own hands. Tom would have hunted out the villain and

ins out to the plantation, and they will surrender the place to its claimantslaves, land, everything. Then, sir, we send the ladies-Mme. Davezac, along with my daughter Ann and the little boy-over to my plantation, while w remain behind to deal with the gentle man. You understand? I don't think he'll live very long to enjoy the proper ty, and this time I don't think he'l

"We'll see to that," replied Aaron quietly. "There's you and Tom and

"And Colonel Moreau," supplement ed the judge. "I understand he is a dead shot. Then there is M. Veaudry whom you know. He has long been a suitor of Miss Adele's, but since her father's death naturally she has been in no frame of mind for courtship, and consequently poor Anatole is as bitter on the subject of Kirby as she her

"Poor Cousin Adele!" murmure Aaron, wiping his eyes. "When I las saw her she was such a happy, brigh eyed girl. To think of her young life being made a tragedy by this scout drel! I'd cut off my right hand for that girl, Judge Pleydell. But this Colonel Moreau, this defender of the family-you speak of his co-operation Is he, then, in town?"

"I have heard so," said the other quietly, "and there is no doubt that he will join us in our crusade agains this scoundrel. He is not the man to forget or condone such an unspeakably vile action as he witnessed aboard the Shotwell that night. In fact, your cousins hope to have the honor of entertaining Colonel Moreau, and Tor has gone out for the express purpor of ascertaining his whereabouts, for heard quite inadvertently that the gen tleman was in town. I recken Mr. Kirby is due to lose his life pretty shortly. He has made a lot of misery for us, sir, and it is high time he had some himself."

CHAPTER V.

HIS trouble has driven Tor pretty near crazy," went on the judge, "and I've put off his and my daughter Ann's wedding until we've settled Mr. Kirby, for the fact is I don't want her to take any chances of being a widow

"Do the ladies know what is going "No, and I cannot impress that fact

upon you too strongly, sir. They believe and are to be kept in the belief that if Colonel Moreau accepts our invitation, which no doubt he will do. we are all merely making a pleasure jaunt to the Randall plantation. We treat the whole affair in that light, sir -a visit in honor of Colonel Moreau. so that the family may make his acquaintance at last and show some measure of their gratitude to him for shooting down the despoiler of their

The entrance of Mmc. Davezac pro-

The rumor proved authentic, but the judge and I," he continued unblush-Rouge, from which town he again probable entertainment of Colonel Moreau."

"Then you must not talk of gloom subjects, as I saw you were doing she replied. "No denials, please, for It is always when I see two heads together in this house it must be that they talk of their hatred for that poor Eugene Lirby,"

"Poor, madame?" echoed Aaron turning in amazement to Judge Pleydell.

"I should have warned you, sir," explained the laster, "that my dear old friend has retained her sentimentality with her youth." Considering that Mme. Davezac was past fifty-five, this was indeed a doubly remarkable per formance.

"Did you know this Kirby, ma-

dame?" gravely inquired Aaron. "No, monsieur, never; but I knew his father, and I cannot make myself to feel about the son as do all these others. I know his reputation, M Aaron. But just think-a boy who had no one to watch him, no one to care! He drifts with bad companions he must live somehow. Oh, I could believe he became a gambler, but that one with such blood in him could do what you all believe he has done-it

"But, madame," protested Aaren. "this gentleman, this stranger, Colone Moreau"-

"Ah," she quickly interrupted, "I think Colonel Moreau acted from the highest motive. None of this family has a greater wish to make his acquaintance and thank him than have I. But I am still sure there was some thing he did not see, something he did not understand, something which would take the stain from the action of that poor young man. Yes; you

ically, "but it is what I think, and it is good to see some one laugh in this house even if it is at my expense." As she turned to leave an old negro entered and announced that the

think me a fool, you laugh at me," she

added as both gentlemen smiled iron-

"French niggehs" would serve coffee in fifteen minutes. "Wait, Croup," commanded Mme Davezac. Then, addressing the two

gentlemen, she added: "Listen. This negro belonged one time to the father of Eugene Kirby. Croup, tell the gentlemen what you have told me one of that time your young M. Kirby has fall from the oak tree." "Well, suh, it were like dis beah,

began the old negro, turning to Judge Pleydell, "Twere long time ago, 'fo Marse Randall done buy me to keep me from bein' sold at auction. Den 1 b'long to ole Marse Kirby, what's been long dead and gone. Dat If'l' Marse Gene Kirby in dem days round de place all de niggehs done know him by de name of 'Lil' Marse Come Cheer I have the benor to tell yoh that

Up, kase dat what de li'l' boy alius say think my way is the best, for we must fo' greetin'. But de way what de nickrecognize the honor due Mr. Randall's name got fixed on him is dis: He sich memory, and that means making no a tendah hahted iad seem lahk he jes resistance to Mr. Kirby's claim. 'The kain't stan' fo' to have nobody in troufirst thing to do is to send your cous- ble nobab. An' one day a lil' yaller, no count, ornery brown pickaninny done clim' up in de high branches of a



'DEY CALL HIM 'LI'L' MARSE COME CHEEK

buhd's nes.' LIT Marse Gene Kirby he ketch sight of him up dere, ap' he holler fo' him to come down. He say: What yo' doin' up dere, picksninny? Don' yo' know dat ele mothen meckin buhd come back, fin' de nest robbed, she das goin' to break buh beah s-mou'nin'? Come down from dere."

"But de pickaninny mighty sassy an' sponds. 'I ain't meanin' to come down from heah-gwine to git de aigs."

"Den Marse Gene say: 'No. yo' isn't I goin' to forch yo' down frum dah an tan yo' kide.' An' fo' anybody could stop him he's halfway up de tree afteh dat pickaniany. Pickaniany crope out on a mighty slendeh branch, but HT marse right along afteh him and grab him under the ahms. Den blimblam

went de branch and down dey come. boffem togedder. My land, I thought dem plum billed, but as dey fall Marse Gene be manage to swing his body underneaf de pickaninny-what's ever littler dan Marse Gene an' only a wuffless slave anyhow-so dat when dehit de ground dat pickaninny land on top o' li'l' marse. But he 'gun to yell lahk be's kilt. Den li'l' marse all he de is to smile when we bend oven him, an' he say to de pickaninny, 'Come cheer up. Dat's all he say, lyin' dere wif his mig broken. Dat's all, suh. Croup besitated and then added: "I ain't seen il'i marse sence he was n BT boy, and dey say he tuhn out very bad. But lahk I tole yo' is de way he done when he was a HT boy, an' dey call him 'Lil' Marse Come Cheer Up Thank yo', sub." And, with a bow, the

old serving man withdrew "Pernaps you can understand," com mented Mme Wavezac.

"My dear indy," replied the judge. 'I fear the argument is wasted. It is a fact that the late Emperor Nero, a well known but disreputable charac ter in Roman history, was very ten-

der hearted during his boyhood." "And," added Aaron, with much bitterness, "that a soul of such promise as a child should have fallen so low as a man makes him all the less ing of your pity. The case against

this Kirby is quite clear." "Perhaps I am ver' foolish that I can't believe with you," she returned "But are we not going to the planta tion to forget all such things? Let

us not discuss the matter further." It was not long before young Ran dall arrived and acquainted the others with his happy meeting with Colonel Moreau. It was then agreed that the boy in order to prepare his home for the bonored guest should precede the others to Plaquemine. Judge Pleydell having orders to leave at his plantation, proceeding from there to the Randalls' home, the pleasure of receiving Colonel Moreau was thus left in the hands of Aaron.

"He may be here at any moment, explained Tom, "and as I must change into riding togs you will have to receive him, cousin. One of our blood must be here to welcome him. I don't think we can show too much honor to the man who tried to avenge my father. So far I am the only member of the family who has made his acquaintance. I will come down as soon as I can, but you will not find him difficult to entertain. He's a fine fellow in every sense of the word."

Shortly after Judge Pleydell had departed, while the ladies were busily engaged with their packing and young Randall was dressing, the tall figure of the flower of southern chivalry, portmanteau in hand, arrived at Mme Davezac's and was heartfly greeted by the expectant Aaron, who, sensible of his duties as host, put forth every effort to receive this distinguished visitor in the manner befitting one who owned such presumable rank and vir-

"Allow me to welcome you, sir," he said. "My name is Aaron Randall. and I have the honor to be cousin to the poor children you have befriended.

May I offer you a morning dram, sir?" Moreau accepted the glass with his native courtesy and, raising it, murmured: "With yoh, suh! I regret." he added in his best manner, "that I have never been able to meet the Indies of yoh cousin's household, and I was delighted to hear today from Mr. Randall that I am to have the pleasure of helping to complete the punishment I began moh than a year ago on the destroyer of this family's happiness. I allude, sub, to the notorious Cameo

Kirby." "You call a pistol ball through the right lung only a beginning, colonel?" mildly inquired Aaron, impressed by his visitor's evident prowess.

"The ball I put through Kirby's right lung, suh, was the result of my indignation foh others," replied Moreau. "The one I shall hope to put through his heart is foh myself. Yoh family's plan foh disposing of the scoundrel has my entire approval, suh